

*September 16, 2010*

Washington, D.C. – A bill authored by Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) to help address the threat of methamphetamine abuse in California's communities today passed the Committee on Energy and Commerce's Subcommittee on Health.

The METH (Methamphetamine Education, Treatment, and Hope) Act will improve identification and prevention of methamphetamine addiction, broaden support for treatment programs targeted to serve pregnant and parenting women, and support youth involvement in creating programs to deter drug usage. Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack (R, CA-45) is an original cosponsor of H.R. 2818 and the bill passed the Subcommittee on Health today with bipartisan support.

"Unfortunately, meth abuse is a serious issue for our area," said Rep. McNerney. "I want to make sure that we have the tools to fight back against this very harmful substance and the negative impact it has on our entire community. This bill will help us do that by providing grant funds to areas where the resources are needed most."

Specifically, the bill instructs the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to:

- Collaborate with professionals to raise awareness about how to recognize signs of substance abuse and apply practices for screening and treating individuals with or at-risk for developing an addiction, including addiction to methamphetamine or other drugs.
- Maintain a clearinghouse that provides information and educational materials to employers and employees about drug testing policies and programs.
- Grant awards in rural areas, areas that have been determined to have a shortage of mental health professional or substance abuse treatment options, and to areas determined to have high rates of addiction to methamphetamine or other drugs.
- Expand, intensify, and coordinate efforts to provide methamphetamine or other drug addiction treatment to pregnant and parenting women.
- Support youth involvement in developing and implementing prevention strategies for youth with regards to meth and other drugs.

The bill also provides for funding of such programs for 5 fiscal years, beginning with the amount of \$16 million in 2012.

According to a 2008 report issued by the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, which references statistics from the Office of Applied Research and Analysis (OARA), California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, over 10,000 people in the San Joaquin Valley were

treated for methamphetamine abuse between 2007 and 2008. Over 4,000 of these people were women with minor children.

The bill is now expected to be considered by the full Committee on Energy and Commerce.